

Department of Children and Families
Division of Child Protection and Permanency (CP&P)

Bill of Rights

To Ensure the Rights of Each Child and Youth in CP&P Placement

*This is a general list created in an effort to help you understand your rights while in an out-of-home placement.
Please note that there may be exceptions in certain cases.*

YOU HAVE THE RIGHT:

Overall

- To be given a copy of these rights; which has been signed by you.
- To be informed of your rights in a way that is easy to understand.
- To have these rights read and explained to you, if there is any confusion.
- To keep your information private to the extent possible under the law.
- To be who you are. To be able to express yourself as an individual in a respectful and meaningful way.
- To be involved in making decisions that affect your life, and to express your views about your placement.
- To receive adequate food, proper clothing, and safe shelter.
- To live in a safe, clean, caring & healthy environment; and to participate as a family member in the home in which you live.
- To participate in community and school activities such as sports, extracurricular activities, hobbies, clubs and other activities which enrich and inform your daily life.
- To participate in religious or spiritual activities of your choice, or the choice of your biological parent(s).
- To enjoy being in the outdoors at regular and frequent intervals.
- To have access to letter writing materials and stamps, and the use of the telephone to communicate with family members, friends and other persons with whom you have a positive relationship.
- To have a placement in the least restrictive setting which best fits your individual needs and reflects your best interest.
- To be heard and listened to, and to have adults explain things that you may not understand, in an age appropriate way.
- To have regular contact with the Department of Children and Families.
- To communicate and visit with your family and friends from whom you are living apart, in accordance with your case plan or transitional plan.
- To be involved in and drive transition planning and the development of your own case plan and goals through participating in Family Team Meetings, Court hearings, school meetings, and other meetings that involve making decisions about your life.
- To include safe and positive family, resource parents, caring adults, and other supports in your case planning and goal setting meetings.

- To be made aware of services, supports, and resources that will help you to achieve your goals identified in your case or transition plan.
- To understand how you may raise concerns about your care and treatment. You can talk directly with your assigned CP&P Worker or his or her direct Supervisor in the Local CP&P Office. You can also share your concerns by contacting the Office of Advocacy (Telephone: 1-877-543-7864 – Email: askdcf@dcf.state.nj.us).

Health

- To be a voice in your medical treatment.
- To receive proper medical care on a routine or emergency basis.
- To have an accurate, current, and full health assessment.
- To receive up-to-date visits with health care professionals (e.g., doctors and dentists).
- To have access to mental health services, as needed, or as mandated.
- To receive your health records as requested, starting at age 18 or upon case closure.
- To be aware of and maintain contact with your assigned Child Health Nurse.

Safety

- To be free from physical, mental, or emotional abuse.
- To be free from needless physical control and isolation.
- To be free from abuse, neglect, exploitation, discrimination, and harassment.
- To be protected from all forms of physical and sexual harassment.
- To be free from sexual abuse, physical punishment, or the threat of such action.
- To be in an environment free from drugs and risky conditions.

Education

- To an educational program to help you with your exact needs to make sure you can learn in the best way possible.
- To be in a safe and substance free learning environment.
- To have a “voice” in your own education and to achieve your educational goals.
- To have an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) developed specifically for you (if the school district agrees it is appropriate); and to participate in the development of such a plan.
- To participate in the decision-making process to establish which educational setting is in your best interest.

- To have access to your student record. If you are 18 or older, you have the right to obtain a copy of your education record from your school district. If you are under 18, you must go through your CP&P Worker or caregiver to get your records.
- To receive support, guidance, and encouragement in planning for your future; before and after graduation from high school.

Court Involvement

- To have regular communication with your Worker, or provider who is supervising your care and treatment.
- To be in contact with your Law Guardian or Law Guardian Investigator, and (if appointed) the Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA worker).
- To be informed of an upcoming court hearing by a Resource Parent, as soon as they receive this notification in the mail.
- To be notified by your Law Guardian - of the date, time, purpose, and place of the placement hearing at least 15 days in advance.
- To participate in permanency hearings which involve you and your family.
- To have transportation to attend your permanency hearing. If needed, your CP&P Worker, Law Guardian, or Law Guardian Investigator can make these arrangements for you.

Acknowledgement of Receipt and Understanding

of

Bill of Rights

From the New Jersey Department of Children and Families

Division of Child Protection and Permanency

I

[Print the name of the child/youth]

understand and have received a copy of the Children and Youth Bill of Rights from the New Jersey Department of Children and Families, Division of Child Protection and Permanency.

Signature (child/youth)

Date

Worker's Signature

Date

Copy for Child/Youth

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